



Meeting of cultures: Hawaiian friends from the Kamehameha Schools exploring the RLS poetry trail at Colinton

Aloha from Louis's friends in Hawaii

THEY travelled from half a world away to perform in the city of Robert Louis Stevenson's birth – and to remember the Princess who was his friend.

Pupils from the Kamehameha Schools in Hawaii appeared this summer at the Edinburgh Fringe in an opera called *Ha'upu*, their own recreation of a Hawaiian legend which can be fairly described as their 'Helen of Troy'.

Through traditional music, song and dance, it tells how a Princess is kidnapped, love blossoms when she recognises the integrity of her captor, and then a fleet sets sail to reclaim her... But the young Hawaiians were keen also to cele-

brate the life of another Princess who befriended Louis during his extended stay in their country in 1889.

Princess Victoria Kaiulani Cleghorn was the niece of King David Kalakaua, who entertained Louis, Fanny, Belle and Lloyd and became their friend, along with other members of his family.

Louis was particularly taken with the 'Little Princess' and wrote a poem and letters of introduction for her when she left Hawaii to complete her schooling in Britain, during which she visited her Scottish father's homeland.

Dreghorn Castle in Colinton, where Kaiulani stayed as a guest, was demol-

ished in 1955, but this year's young visitors made a pilgrimage to the village to visit the church and manse which was a second home to the young Louis when his grandfather, the Rev Dr Lewis Balfour, was minister there.

They followed the Stevenson poetry trail, sang a deeply moving psalm under the yew tree in the manse garden, then explored the church before giving a superb passage of ensemble song and dance in appreciation of their welcome.

Club members Jack Shedden and Peter Berry responded by entertaining them in Stevenson's Scots!

The Little Princess – Back Page



THE Devil Inside is a Scottish Opera and Music Theatre Wales co-production, with libretto by Louise Welsh and composed by Stuart Macrae, based on RLS's classic South Seas tale, The Bottle Imp.

Louise Welsh is one of Scotland's most exciting contemporary writers, well known as an articulate proponent of RLS, so a number of club members went with high hopes to the January performances in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The opera is a compelling study of individuals tested by the seductive power of the demon in the bottle, who grants every wish to whoever possesses it – but at the threat of damnation for any who cannot relinquish it.

Welsh has given the story a contemporary setting, making its proponents two young backpackers who buy the bottle with their last \$50 and are propelled into the international property market to wallow in riches.

It is an intimate production, with a cast of four portraying just five characters, and deceptively simple stage setting and effects. The compelling narrative is driven with unrelenting intensity by MacRae's vividly imaginative music, with effects that distinctly characterise even the invisible imp.

The two young men who enter into the diabolical pact and the innocent girl caught up in it are sensitively portrayed in both libretto and performance, with poignant arias heightening the sense of them as individuals and dramatic foils for one another.

There is a dark strand of foreboding which runs all through The Bottle Imp – it is Stevenson, after all – such as when Keawe discovers the deaths of his uncle and cousin have brought him the wealth he wished for.

Museum winners

MORE than ten years of service as volunteers at the Writers' Museum in Edinburgh were recognised when Club members attended a City of Edinburgh Council reception to celebrate the museum being recognised as one of the world's best tourist attractions in the TripExpert Experts' Choice Awards

A BOUND copy of the vocal score for The Devil Inside opera based on Stevenson's The Bottle Imp has been presented to the Club by Scottish Opera in recognition of its financial support. The score, by composer Stuart MacRae and librettist Louise Welsh, will be housed for the time being in Edinburgh Napier University's Stevenson Collection.

Learning the write way to tell a story

A BIG part of being a writer is being a listener, even assuming the role of a detective, observing and then processing what you hear and see.

So said writer and Glasgow University creative writing professor Louise Welsh during her wide-ranging master class for the finalists in the 2016 Robert Louis Stevenson Club/Edinburgh Napier University Writing Competition, at the university's Merchiston Campus.

Seven finalists from all over Scotland attended and were initiated into the mysteries of where to find ideas, plotting a story, evoking a setting, theme, characterisation, using the five senses, creating conflict and how point of view affects narrative perspective, illustrated by examples from Stevenson's own writing.

Louise, fresh from several months in the southern hemisphere which included a trip to Samoa and Stevenson's grave on Mount Vaea, is passionate about his work.

She remembers as a small child her father reading *Treasure Island* to her and being terrified by the character of Blind Pew and the delivery of the black spot. She read the



competition submissions while in the South Seas and was impressed by their diversity of subject matter and style, which, she felt, reflected Stevenson's own diversity as a writer.

After some group exercises she had many tips to share about the writing life, such as working your way through writer's block, the place of play in creativity, the efficacy of topping and tailing a piece of writing and the importance of fully understanding your characters.

The overall winner was Stephanie Glendinning from Banchory Academy, the

third winner from this school in as many years, with a vividly dramatic fiction set in a Japanese PoW camp, inspired by her grandfather's war memories

Runners-up in the fiction category were: Phoebe MacDonald (Kirkcaldy High School), Kimberley Wong (Glasgow High School) and Nathan Copson (Gordon Schools, Huntly).

Brogan Coll (Auchmucky High School, Fife) won the reflective writing category with a heartfelt piece entitled Fierce about coming to terms with his sexuality.

GILLEAN SOMERVILLE-ARJAT



Winners: Stephanie Glendinning with John Macfie and, below, Brogan Coll with author Louise Welsh at the young writers' workshop, left



Forth crossing: Willie and Allan with some of the 'Alison Hasties' at Queensferry

Kidnapped 130 reaches last triumphant chapter

A UNIQUE endurance challenge reliving Robert Louis Stevenson's Kidnapped has been completed by modern day adventurers Alan Rankin and Willie Gibson.

Recreating the adventures of David Balfour and Alan Breck, the pair sailed Alan's racing trimaran Trade Winds from South Queensferry on the Forth around Orkney and then southwards passing Cape Wrath, Skye and Tiree before landing on Erraid.

From there they followed David and Alan's journey on foot across Mull, Morvern, Glen Coe and Rannoch Moor, before being forced by injury to abandon the 260-mile trek half-way through.

But on August 6 they resumed their adventure and pressed on through the Trossachs to Doune, Dunblane, Stirling, Hill-

foots and then over a choppy Forth by rowing boat to South Queensferry, with Queensferry Rowing Club taking the place of Alison Hastie to ferry them across.

Finally on August 13 the pair arrived in Edinburgh, finishing their journey at the setting described at the end of the book – the British Linen Bank, now the Pleasance Theatre and university buildings.

At the end of the challenge, raising funds and awareness for Parkinson's UK, Ocean Youth Trust Scotland and Stevenson Adventures, Alan said: 'We've seen Scotland's coastline and headlands and witnessed some of our wildest lands. It has been a great experience and Willie and I and hope our efforts have helped the work of the charities we're supporting.'

Club Events

OCTOBER 12 RLS: A EUROPEAN JOURNEY

TAKING an international outlook, we meet at the French Institute in Edinburgh for a talk on the European Network In The Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson and how it won accreditation as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. This joint event hosted by the Franco-Scottish Society starts at 7pm at the French Institute, 13 Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh. Numbers are limited to 35 so book early, by September 30 at the latest.

OCTOBER 21 ROYAL MILE WALK WITH BURNS AND STEVENSON

JOIN actors John Shedden and Peter Berry in the spirit of the two Roberts as they perform and illuminate with humorous interplay many of the famous works of two of Scotland's greatest writers during a 90-minute walk up the Royal Mile from the Canongate Church to the Writers' Museum. Meet 11am at the Fergusson statue by the Canongate Church, £8 pp. Lunch option: Vittoria on the Bridge.

NOVEMBER 12 ANNUAL LUNCHEON

THE RLS Club's Annual Luncheon will be held at the New Club in Edinburgh's Princes Street, where this year's guest speaker will be The Hon. Lord Stewart, Senator of the College of Justice, on the theme of Stevenson and the Appin Murder. The lunch is always a popular event and early booking is advised. Full details and a booking form in the papers accompanying this issue.

DECEMBER 3 RLS IN AMERICA

HEADING Stateside, join Dr Mitchell Manson for an illustrated talk on RLS and his Club in America. Meet 10.30am for 11.00 at The Royal Scots Club, 29-31 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh. £5 reservation by Nov 30 please.

BOOKING

To book an event or for more information, contact Events Secretary Margaret Wilkie at wilkiejl@blueyonder.co.uk or ring 0131 477 6738



Kaiulani's picture: Can anyone identify the Highland scene?



Heir apparent: Princess Victoria Kaiulani Cleghorn

Scots sojourn of Stevenson's Little Princess

THE Little Princess of Hawaii was just 13 when in 1889 she waved goodbye to her friend Robert Louis Stevenson and boarded the ship that would take her to school in England.

Princess Victoria Kaiulani was the daughter of Princess Miriam Likelike, sister of the King of Hawaii, and Alexander Cleghorn, a Scottish merchant and financier from Edinburgh.

She was to receive an education 'fit for a future queen' at an English boarding school, but her father wanted her to



Scots blood: Kaiulani with her father

see Scotland and absorb the culture, as her uncle King David Kalakaua had done in 1881 when he sailed on Loch Lomond and was entertained by the pipe band of The Black Watch.

Kaiulani's host during an extended stay at Dreghorn Castle in Colinton was an MP and friend of her father's, Robert Macfie, whose family were wealthy sugar merchants. The 16-year-old Princess was mourning the death of her uncle the King, who had been succeeded by her aunt Liliuokalani, and she planted a tree in Kalakaua's memory at Dreghorn.

But Kaiulani, now the heir apparent, enjoyed her stay in Scotland. She learned Gaelic and rode her horse at great speed through the Highlands where the Princess, a gifted artist, also painted an unidentified landscape.

Kaiulani was just 17 when her aunt Liliuokalani was deposed as Queen in a revolution that would end in the annexation of Hawaii by the USA.

The Princess sailed at once for the States to plead for justice people 'strong in the knowledge that 70 millions of people in this free land will

hear my cry and refuse to let their flag cover the dishonour of mine'.

But her pleas fell on deaf ears and she returned to Hawaii as an unwilling private citizen of a republic. She boycotted the eventual annexation ceremony in 1898 and dressed in mourning black in protest at its illegality. The following year, having caught a fever after getting soaked on a ride through the Hawaiian mountains, the Princess died of pneumonia. She was just 23.

Her life was in some ways tragic but she touched the hearts of many – including RLS, who had penned a much-treasured poem in her autograph book.

*Forth from her land to mine she goes,
The island maid, the island rose,
Light of heart and bright of face:
The daughter of a double race.*

*Her islands here, in Southern sun,
Shall mourn their Kaiulani gone,
And I, in her dear banyan shade,
Look vainly for my little maid.*

*But our Scots islands far away
Shall glitter with unwonted day,
And cast for once their tempests by
To smile in Kaiulani's eye.*

WHAT better way to celebrate the wedding anniversary of Robert Louis Stevenson and Fanny Osbourne than with afternoon tea in the garden of the Stevenson House in Monterey?

Rain was threatening but the Californian sun prevailed as thirty members of the RLS Club of Monterey were served tea, scones, *petits fours*, cookies and sandwiches accompanied by harp music and readings by club member Keith Decker,

Californian anniversary

pictured, who in August also gave a Stevenson House lecture to celebrate Louis's arrival in Monterey, followed by drinks and nibbles in the garden.

And on November 12 there will be cake and conversation at Monterey Library for the annual Unbirthday celebration, marking the birthday Louis gave away to little Annie Ide.



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